



**CONGRESSMAN CURT WELDON**

***7th District Pennsylvania***



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**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN CURT WELDON  
ARMY MODERNIZATION HEARING  
MARCH 11, 1997**

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Today's hearing will consider the Army's modernization budget requests.

It is a pleasure for me to co-chair today's hearing with my friend and colleague, Duncan Hunter, and members of both R&D and Procurement Subcommittees.

We share a common concern for the decline in defense spending over the last years. Although the Army's entire modernization budget once again appears sadly under funded, I will focus on the Army's R&D funding which has decreased from \$4.9 billion in FY 97 to \$4.5 billion in FY 98. This represents only 13% of the Department of Defense's \$35.9 billion R&D request for FY98.

In comparison, the Army's R&D request continues to be dwarfed by those of the other services - with the Navy at \$7.9B and the Air Force's request of \$14.0 B.

Again this year, modernization budgets continue to be sacrificed as a "bill payer" for shortfalls in the services personnel and readiness accounts. The Administration's budget submission to Congress continues to delay funding for modernization until the turn of the century. This at a time when the Army is attempting to leap ahead in technology to meet the threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Last month, thirty members of both the R&D and Procurement Subcommittees received extensive classified briefings from Central Intelligence Agency analysts regarding a multitude of present and future threats, to include proliferation of weapons systems around the world that pose threats to several of the Army's current and future systems. Of note, the analysts highlighted the near-term vulnerability of the United States armor, and the lack of concerted research and development for improved armor for ground vehicles.

Today, the Army has brought a few items that illustrate the fruits of some of its science and technology efforts as a background on which we may want to focus some of our discussions. As Dr. Anita Jones indicated in her testimony week before last, Department Science and Technology efforts require steady and consistent funding now, with some modest growth in future years, from this point forward if we are to maintain a technology edge over our adversaries in the next century.